

FAMILY

The Newsletter of FAMILY of Woodstock, Inc.
Volume 16, Issue 2 - NOV 2016

...from Michael's Pen

Dear Friends,

One of the unique aspects of Family of Woodstock, Inc.'s growth is the broad spectrum of crisis issues that the agency tackles- emergency shelter, food insecurity, domestic violence, sexual trafficking, mental health, substance abuse and criminal justice issues. As a result, we provide support and assistance to many of those most at-risk in our community. While the particular issues that they bring to us for help vary, there is one characteristic of virtually all of those seeking help. Namely that they have been damaged by trauma in their lives. In the last few years, leaders of the agency have been studying the impact of trauma and how to respond to people's needs in a trauma-informed way. We feel that this approach is a key to making our relationships with those needing help safe and trusted. We are committed to training all of our staff and other agencies that recognize the importance of it. In large part, this issue of Family Ties is devoted to that work and the profound impact that it can have.



When I am asked what makes Family special, the answer is easy- the remarkable people we attract. In general, we are not looking for the most knowledgeable; we're looking for someone who can put aside their own issues and show sufficient respect to the person seeking help to listen rather than telling them what to do. The people who work for Family highly value the work and it is remarkable how many people stay with us and grow with us for many, many years. We are highlighting three new leaders of the agency who bring rich new experiences and skills to our leadership team.

In the next few weeks, we will be sending out our single annual solicitation. In some respects, next year's budget looks ominous to me. While we of course support the increase in the minimum wage, it will have a significant impact on our agency's budget and viability if our government contracts, which represent 90% of our income, do not increase accordingly. We have five years to reach the new required salary level and there is not any indication that contracts will increase in the first of the five years. So I am asking, if you can, to place a higher value on the contribution Family makes to the community this year. Thank you.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of Family of Woodstock, Inc., we wish you a joyous and healthy holiday season.

Best regards,

Michael Berg
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

(P.S. As you read through this issue, the following definition of Trauma Informed Care may be helpful to you: **Trauma Informed Care recognizes and responds to the multiple ways that traumatic experiences effect individuals and families. To avoid re-traumatization, services and strategies are designed to offer safety; trust- worthiness; collaboration; peer support; cultural and gender sensitivity; and empowerment to voice concerns and make choices.)**

TOUGH and Love

Thank you to the MidWay resident who agreed to be interviewed for this article.

resident at MidWay, sees the dynamic of how FAMILY helps. MidWay is one of the adolescent services programs that have slowly shifted their focus to Trauma Informed Care. Jen Pineda describes that shift. "It's a different language. Starting with Intake, our assessment questions have changed. It isn't 'What did you do wrong?' so much as 'What happened?' That opens the door to a much fuller picture."

"What my case manager does isn't tough love. She is loving and caring. And then she says 'OK. Now you have to get up and get out and make this happen.'" That is how Karina (not her real name), who is a

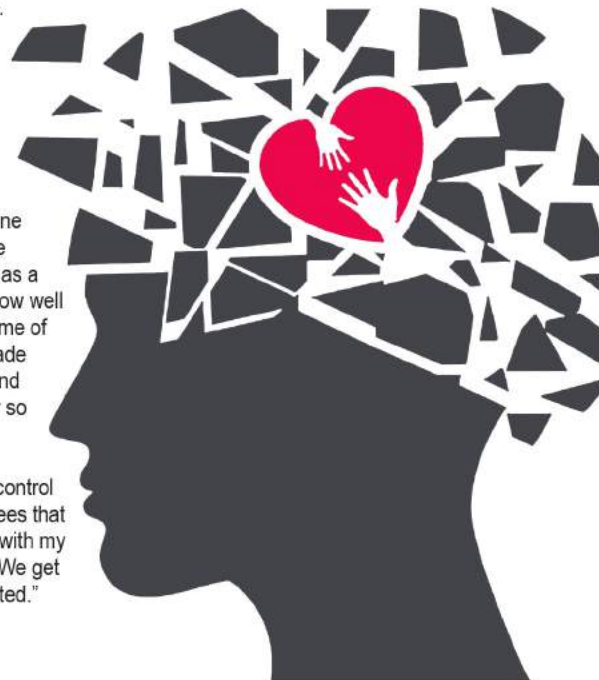
Karina has been involved with FAMILY off and on since she was in her early teens. She is now nineteen and heading back to college while staying a MidWay a while longer. "I spent so much time fighting with my mother. I couldn't live at home anymore." Karina had been in and out of Family House when she was younger and then lived back home for awhile. At the breaking point, she confided in her Case Manager and he opened the door to MidWay. "I couldn't believe I had that option," she recalled. "I was ecstatic!" Excited, yet not ready for full independence, MidWay provided a safe opportunity. "I had no idea what I wanted to do. I wasted time and sat around the house. My Case Manager took the time to really listen to me. She was patient and loving. And then she said, 'OK, you've got to get out of the house at least a few hours a day. What do you want to do?' I liked the separateness and my personal space. I didn't have that at home. We were always at each other. I didn't want to lose this chance so I worked with the Youth Employment Program to find a job. I had no idea what I wanted. I just needed to do ME."

The jobs Karina got through FAMILY's Youth Employment Program suited her. The Case Managers knew what kind of person she was and what she liked. They built her work experience so that she could succeed. She began at the Hodge Center and is now a Peer Mentor at BOCES. "I get to do what I love to do and I'm getting paid." Not only that. Karina is about to begin working on her Associate's Degree in Business through an online university.

Karina's story may sound like a typical teenager's story, but with FAMILY's clients there is usually a difference, and the difference lies in some kind of traumatic experience. Lili Evers is the Children's Case Manager at the Family Inn homeless shelter and a Facilitator with the Evolve Program for adults who are violent. She has taken a number of trainings on Trauma Informed Care and sees its impact on her work. "Our clients are our clients for a reason," she observed recently. "It is human nature to think that everyone is like us. We don't understand why it is difficult for others to make changes we see as simple. Sometimes our staff members get frustrated because a person makes the same mistakes repeatedly or is rude or aggressive. Understanding the long-term effects of trauma helps me remember that survivors process things differently. Everything about the language of Trauma Informed Care reminds us that things are frightening for our clients. They experience much of what is offered as punishment."

Lili points out that most of FAMILY's residential clients have experienced some kind of trauma. It could be domestic violence, sexual abuse, neglect, or extreme disruption in the home. Homelessness itself is traumatic. Lili stresses the importance of open questions rather than presenting house rules. "When I talk with a parent, I learn much more when I ask them how they discipline their children than I do if I just say that we do not allow hitting at the shelter. Asking the question, and asking how they were disciplined as a child, gives me the opportunity to follow up with a question about how well what they do works. We can talk about other skills. I get to hear some of the challenges and how they see them. In the past I might have made quick judgments about people. Now I am much more empathetic and they respond differently. Not feeling judged is a new experience for so many of the people we work with."

The approach has worked for Karina. With a bit of separation and control over when and how long she spends time with her family, Karina sees that her mother is supportive and loving. "Now I can decide to meet up with my mother when I am ready. It isn't all the time. It's in smaller chunks. We get along much better. I respect her and my stepdad, and I feel respected."



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FAMILY Helping Children...in 2015

FAMILY does so much because FAMILY is really a dozen or more agencies rolled into one comprehensive network. With sixteen different programs and a high profile for crisis intervention services, one might assume that most of the people FAMILY helps are adults. It may be an adult who comes to find services, but young people are, by far, the largest group to benefit. If they are homeless with their family or couch surfing on their own; if they need quality care while their parents work; if they need support to recover from substance abuse; if they are at risk of going to jail; or if they are just trying to make better decisions for the future, FAMILY helps to lift them up.

More than a Bed...

It takes a tremendous amount of effort to move forward out of a crisis. FAMILY's shelters (for homeless individuals & families, for survivors of domestic violence, and for youth) do so much more than offer a bed and meals. For the hundreds of people who stayed in our shelters in 2015, here are some of the essential "extras" that you might not consider go into helping someone find and keep stability in their lives.



"New" at FAMILY has many meanings. Some "new" staff are completely new to the agency, while others find newness in added responsibilities or moving to different programs. Staff consistently point to these opportunities for growth and change as key reasons they stay with FAMILY for many years. We want to acknowledge some of our newest leaders in the following profiles. Their skills and enthusiasm are what continue to help FAMILY improve and expand our services.



KAREN STORCH is the Program Director at FAMILY's Washbourne House for survivors of domestic violence. "I had been working in Bennington, VT at a similar agency. I knew FAMILY had what I was looking for." Karen worked her way up from counselor to case manager to Assistant Program Director. She recently assumed the Director's position. "I am excited about the move toward Trauma Informed Care. It means being more flexible, which is also a challenge in a residential program. People who have experienced trauma, especially violence, are fearful. Often they are unable to make decisions. Because a person's abuser has controlled just about everything in their lives, we need to help them develop confidence in their own choices." Karen and her staff have initiated specialized

yoga classes, oriented for trauma survivors and a clay sculpting workshop as well. Residents also plan meals with the house's cook. It may take a bit more time than repeating a weekly menu, but food provides comfort and can be a cultural connection as well. "It's important to make sure that any rules are for the benefit of our residents and not just to meet the shelter's needs or the requirements of our funding sources. I had great mentors when I started at FAMILY. Now I'm in the Fordham MSW program. I look forward to adding to what we are already doing."



IVAN ECHENIQUE is the brand new Program Director at FAMILY's New Paltz Hotline and Walk-In Center. With just a few months on the job, Ivan says that the Assistant Director, Icilma Lewis, and the volunteer staff have been invaluable in helping him get started. "They have been so gracious and welcoming. Their feedback has taught me a lot about the direction I need to take. Every challenge is a learning opportunity and I am excited to be here." Originally from Chile, Ivan's family moved to the New Paltz area when he was six years old. As a local, he already knows the community well. "I want to reach out to the farming community. There are many Spanish speakers who don't know what FAMILY might offer to them. I also want to build the volunteer base. We have a great staff but I know there are more people who would love to help and have skills we are missing. We already have one new volunteer in the current training who is bi-lingual." Ivan's work experience is largely in human resources. "I helped someone get a job in my first position. It was just before Christmas. She came by to thank me for helping her have Christmas with her family. I knew then that helping people was what I wanted to do. It is truly a great honor to be part of this wonderful agency and I love that I am back in my own community."

CARL CHIPMAN is the new President of FAMILY's Board of Directors. He succeeds Joan Eck, who served as President for more than a decade. Her increased responsibilities at Ulster Savings Bank left her with less time for FAMILY's growing challenges. "Joan is a great leader," Carl observed. "She works hard and always has a calm, even temper. She weighs issues and is a good listener. I am glad she will be staying as a board member. Continuity is as important as new energy." Carl has run his own business, has served as President of the Rondout Valley School Board, and is the Supervisor for the Town of Rochester. "It is time for the board to help FAMILY evolve. Michael Berg has built the heart and soul of the organization, but we have to look ahead to a time when he won't be there. I want to model a dedication to policy-making and fiscal



Choosing To Heal

Trauma can be emotional, physical, or both. Whatever form it takes, and at whatever age, the sense of fear and helplessness it creates can overwhelm a person's resources for coping. The impact of traumatic stress can be devastating and long-lasting, interfering with a person's sense of safety, sense of self, and perception of control over one's life. How can physical activities help?

The Washbourne House offers specialized Yoga practice and a clay sculpting activity to residents, believing that engaging physically and creatively can build confidence and awareness in women who have experienced years of abuse. PTSD can cause tremendous confusion, forgetfulness, and an inability to make decisions about even minor things. Theresa Widmann of Kingston's Anahata Yoga studio has received training in adapting yoga for survivors of trauma. She offers her program regularly to women at The Washbourne House. "It is completely voluntary so that is their first decision. They choose to participate. I give options about the exercises and encourage them to notice what their bodies feel like at any given moment. How they feel is used to make a choice to modify a posture and then observe if it feels better. Over time they can develop trust in their own decision-making."

Jack Mullen is a sculptor and mold-maker. He also worked for a time at FAMILY's homeless shelter when it was The King's Inn. He brings some simple sculpting tools and some Sculpty to Washbourne House. "I don't teach, but my presence gives them permission to play with the clay. There is a structure, a time set aside to create something. They would ask, 'What should I do now?' and I would ask them 'What do you want to do now?' They aren't used to giving themselves permission." Jack has been recovering from an surgery but he is starting to think about volunteering again. "I have no expectations. Sometimes no one shows up. But I enjoy seeing them take something they make out of the oven. They have fun."

Both of these opportunities help trauma survivors take control. Most therapies focus on memories and past experiences. These activities focus on the present moment. "Yoga focuses on the breath," observes Widmann. "The women have to notice what is going on in their bodies and a change in their breathing effects how they are feeling."



oversight. The board can help the agency get ahead of the many crises we deal with. I am excited about involving all of our board members. They have a lot of important skills."

FAMILY's mission is important to Carl. It offers the safety net that he lacked as a child. "I was ten years old and felt helpless to protect myself and my mother from my father's terrible violence. I could have used what FAMILY offers. I feel for people who fall through the cracks. We help them get back on their feet, and they often choose to help others do the same. Unfortunately, FAMILY will always be needed."

JEN PIDEDA has been with FAMILY for fourteen years, working as a Case Manager at The Washbourne House and then at MidWay in Ellenville. Like many at FAMILY, she has assumed new responsibilities and each time, she is in many ways, "new." Jen is now the Program Director for both MidWays, and for three other adolescent services programs. It is a big change from the direct client work that she is used to. Now she does more desk work and quite a bit of staff supervision and motivation. "Co-worker relationships at FAMILY are special. The work is stressful, and we have to support each other. If you understand what someone else is doing, what they are going through, it can keep them from burning out. I try to be fair and consistent. It's taken me years to get comfortable as a Director. Now, when I'm bored I Google "How to make staff happy."



At the same time, she has been working on her Master's in Social Work at Fordham and is almost done. "I'm glad I waited to go back to school. I can bring critical thinking to my work and it feels really positive." As part of her desire to learn and grow, Jen has become the driving force introducing Trauma Informed Care throughout FAMILY's programs. She was selected to be part of a statewide collaborative sharing "best practices" among substance abuse agencies, and has also brought the trauma care perspective to sister agencies in the county. "It's a big adjustment. It's shifting from a rule/punishment driven approach to a more individualized one focused on helping someone learn to make better decisions for themselves. After three years, we are really seeing it sink in with our adolescent programs. Trauma has long-lasting effects on the brain, and addressing fears and perceptions is key to creating a sense of security that supports change."

Join us at our first great event of 2017!

FAMILY's

Fabulous Chocolate Lover's Social

Sunday, February 12TH ~ Noon to 3PM
at Diamond Mills in Saugerties

Everything chocolate to eat and drink and



Visit our brand new re-imagined website for current news,
volunteer and employment opportunities, events,
and links to our program-specific Facebook pages.

WWW.FAMILYOFWOODSTOCKINC.ORG

textmeback.org

text + chat hotline
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text: 845 679 2485

Check out our newest Hotline Service...
TEXTING!



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Or CURRENT RESIDENT

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT #286
NEWBURGH NY

"The Holidays are coming! You can help!!"

THANKSGIVING...
*is around
the corner.
November 24th*

Family of Woodstock in Woodstock will be holding its **41ST Annual Thanksgiving Day Dinner**. Serving more than 400 people, the dinner relies on donations of food and lots of volunteer time. It's a great way to share this wonderful holiday. Please join us from **1PM -4PM on November 24th at the Mescal Hornbeck Community Center on Rock City Road**. FREE, DELICIOUS and ALL ARE WELCOME! Call 679-2485 to help.

Start Thanksgiving Day off with a great run (or walk) at the annual **New Paltz Turkey Trot!** This is a huge fundraiser for our New Paltz Food Pantry. Pre-registration required - www.newpaltzturkeytrot.com

Supporters, Friends and Former Clients of FAMILY's Adolescent Services programs are invited to the **Annual Thanksgiving Dinner on Tuesday, November 22nd at 6PM at the Old Dutch Church, 272 Wall St. in Kingston**. It's all about gratitude! Call 331-7080 for more information or to donate food.

*...and then
comes
CHRISTMAS!*

ALL OF OUR PROGRAMS collect gifts for the families and individuals they serve. **SHOP EARLY!** It really helps to have your unwrapped gifts early in December so we can organize and distribute them before Christmas week. Help us reduce everyone's holiday anxiety.

SOLICIT your friends and work colleagues. And don't forget that teens and adults appreciate a thoughtful gift as much as the little ones do.

VOLUNTEER to sort and distribute gifts to the families who sign up for help. And if you know someone who would like to receive help at Christmas, please encourage them to call their local FAMILY office during the first week in December to sign up.

DO YOUR SHOPPING AT LOCAL STORES - Local merchants support FAMILY (and many other organizations) all year long. It helps our communities when we shop locally.

BUT... Sometimes you just can't find what you need from a local store. If you are buying something through Amazon.com, go to smile.amazon.com. Enter FAMILY of Woodstock as your preferred charity. Every time you buy something, FAMILY receives .5% of your total.

Holiday Shopping List

I still can't figure out what to get for Aunt Ann, but this is the list that really fills my heart with Holiday spirit!

- ☒ Great games, puzzles, and books for all ages at the Homeless and Domestic Violence Shelter
- ☒ Bath & other personal care items for women in recovery at FAMILY's shelters
- ☒ Art supplies for homeless teens at Family House
- ☒ Certificates for any store- clothing, music, videos or movie theater passes - All Ages Appreciate These!
- ☒ Food and Gasoline Gift Certificates for families registered to receive holiday help at your local FAMILY Walk In Center

*And don't forget
FAMILY does the wrapping
(to make sure people get the most appropriate gifts)*

GIFTS FOR....

Survivors of Domestic Violence 331-7080 ext 327
Teens - 331-7080 or 338-5953
Adults and families in Kingston area 331-7080/
340-1847 or 331-1395
In Ellenville 647-2443 In New Paltz 255-8801/
In Woodstock (and west) 679-2485